1	2	3
32.	Tripura	6424.43
33.	Uttar Pradesh	30858.58
34.	Uttaranchal	30642.50
35.	West Bengal	1078.65
	TOTAL	279712.92

Glaciers of major rivers

1890. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that glaciers of major rivers like Ganga and Yamuna is melting very fast leading to unavailability of drinking water;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps Government is taking in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) The various scientific studies indicate that the glaciers of Himalaya including glaciers of major rivers like Ganga and Yamuna are receding at varying rates in different regions. Accordingly, due to melting of ice, consequent upon faster recession, the runoff of the Himalayan rivers may initially increase marginally. Thereafter, there may be decrease in water availability.

(c) A National Action Plan on Climate Change was launched in June 2008 which envisages the National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Eco-system amongst its 8 national missions. This Mission would seek to understand weather and the extent to which the Himalayan glaciers are in recession and how the problem could be addressed.

A new research centre on Himalayan Glaciology has been established at Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, Dehradun. Guidelines and best practices for the governance for sustaining Himalayan Eco-system has been developed and shared with all State Governments in the Himalayan Region.

Protection of environment and forest

1891. SHRI D. RAJA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the news-items published in The Hindu dated 15 November, 2009 captioned "Discrepancies in information on mining leases to Karnataka Minister";

(b) whether Government is aware that the empowered committee on environment of the Supreme Court has found *Prima Facie* discrepancies with regard to violation of forest and environment policies;

(c) if so, what are the reasons for inaction on part of Government in this regard; and

(d) what steps Government would take to protect forests and environment in the areas being surveyed by the empowered committee of Supreme Court?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The Central Empowered Committee (CEC) of the Supreme Court, *prime facie*, is of view that violation of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 has been caused by the Obulapuram Mining Company. The Government of India has, therefore, directed the State Government of Andhra Pradesh that no mining should be permitted till the demarcation is completed in respect of 6 mines, namely, M/s Bellary Iron Ore (P) Ltd. (27.12 ha), M/s Y. Mahabaleshwarappa and sons (20.24), M/s Obulapuram Mining company (25.98 ha), M/s Obulapuram Mining company (39.50 ha), M/s Obulapuram Mining company (68.5 ha) and M/s Anathpur Mining Corporation (6.5 ha). The approvals granted in their favour under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 have been suspended on 30.11.2009 with immediate effect. Further the State Government has been requested to complete survey/demarcation by the Survey of India in a time bound manner. The mining including transportation of excavated Iron Ore has also been stopped till completion of survey/demarcation is done by the Survey of India. After completion of the demarcation of the area by the Survey of India, the protection of forest and environment in the form of afforestation, reforestation, creation of safety zone, phased reclamation of the mined over area in accordance with an approved reclamation plan, soil and water conservation measures in case of erosion prone areas and all possible measures to prevent pollution of rives, nallas, water bodies, etc. be taken up by the mine owners.

Mining operations of Obalapuram Mining Corporation

1892. SHRI D. RAJA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has given any environment and forest clearance for diverse mining operations of Obalapuram Mining Corporation in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, when these approvals and clearances were given;

(c) whether any Central team has been sent to inspect and study the devastation caused on forest lands at this specific mine;

(d) if so, the findings thereof; and

(e) the steps proposed to stop the damage to environment and forest land due to illegal mining activities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Environmental clearances under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and forestry clearances under the provisions of the